

Message Text

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73

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-11 FMC-04

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 CG-00 COA-02 DLOS-06 AID-20

SCI-06 FEA-02 INT-08 CEQ-02 EPA-04 PA-04 USIA-15

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9644

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, DR, US

SUBJECT: FIRST TECHNICAL-LEVEL MEETING ON SUPER-PORT

REF: SD -5045

1. ON JANUARY 17, HEAD PUERTO RICAN TECHNICAL COMMISSION, WILLIAM RIEFKOHL, PHONED FROM SAN JUAN TO BRIEF EMBASSY ON RESULTS OF JOINT MEETING IN SANTO DOMINGO JANUARY 16 WITH DOMINICAN COMMISSION HEADED BY CIVIL DEFENSE CHIEF MARINO ARIZA HERNANDEZ REGARDING SUPER-PORT ISSUE. ACCORDING TO RIEFKOHL, MORNING SESSION WAS DEVOTED TO PRESENTATION BY PUERTO RICANS DESIGNED TO ALLAY FEARS AND REMOVE OBJECTIONS OF DOMINICANS TO DEEP-WATER PORT AND REFINERY PROJECT. IN ADDITION TO ORAL PRESENTATIONS, LARGE NUMBER OF STUDIES OF ECONOMIC, ENGINEERING, AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS OF PROJECT WERE LEFT WITH DOMINICANS. FOLLOWING LUNCH, DOMINICANS TOOK INITIATIVE. THEY CONCEDED THAT NORMAL OPERATION OF PROJECT WOULD PROBABLY NOT DAMAGE DOMINICAN COASTS AND EVEN THAT SMALL ACCIDENTS COULD BE CONTROLLED AS PUERTO RICANS CLAIMED. WHAT WORRIED THEM WAS POSSIBILITY OF MAJOR CATASTROPHE INVOLVING SPILLAGE OF MILLIONS OF GALLONS OF OIL. IF THIS TOOK PLACE THEY ASKED WHO WOULD CLEAN

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UP THE DOMINICAN COAST LINE? WHO WOULD PAY FOR IT?

HOW COULD AFFECTED DOMINICAN
INTERESTS SUCH AS TOURISM AND FISHING SURVIVE DURING THE CLEAN-UP
PERIOD?

2. RIEFKOHL SAID PUERTO RICANS TRIED TO REASSURE DOMINICAN COMMISSION ON THESE POINTS, BUT OBVIOUSLY COULD NOT OFFER IRON-CLAD GUARANTEES. ON ANOTHER TACK, RIEFKOHL SAID PUERTO RICANS SOUGHT TO EMPHASIZE POSSIBLE BENEFITS PROJECT COULD BRING TO DOMINICAN REPUBLIC SUCH AS CONVENIENCE OF MONA ISLAND AS TRANSHIPMENT POINT FOR FUTURE DOMINICAN OIL IMPORTS. HE ALSO STATED THAT PROJECT IS OPEN TO PARTICIPATION BY ALL INTERESTED PARTIES, INCLUDING THE GODR. HE SAID HE INDICATED - BUT DID NOT PROMISE- THAT "SPECIAL CONSIDERATION" MIGHT BE GIVEN TO A REQUEST BY THE GODR TO JOIN IN THE PROJECT.

3. RIEFKOHL EVALUATED THE MEETING AS CONSTRUCTIVE, ALTHOUGH HE SAID IT WOULD BE UNREALISTIC TO EXPECT ALL DOMINICAN RESERVATIONS TO DISAPPEAR. PUERTO RICAN OBJECTIVE, HE SAID, IS TO REDUCE DOMINICAN ANXIETIES TO POINT WHERE PROJECT MAY MOVE FORWARD WITHOUT ELICITING ANGUISHED OUTCRIES FROM DOMINICANS. IF GODR AGREES TO PARTICIPATE IN PROJECT, RIEFKOHL THOUGHT PUERTO RICAN OBJECTIVE WILL BE FAR EASIER TO ATTAIN. NEXT JOINT MEETING OF COMMISSIONS WILL TAKE PLACE IN PUERTO RICO IN FEBRUARY WHEN PUERTO RICANS PLAN TO SPONSOR TOURS OF SUN OIL REFINERY AND ENVIRONS AT YABUCOA AND POSSIBLY HESS REFINERY AT ST. CROIX TO DEMONSTRATE CLEAN OPERATIONS OF MODERN REFINERIES.

4. LOCAL MEDIA REACTION HAS GENERALLY BEEN CONSISTENT WITH RIEFKOHLS DESCRIPTION OF THE MEETING AS CONSTRUCTIVE. ONLY EXCEPTION THUS FAR WAS JANUARY 17 EDITORIAL IN SENSATIONAL AFTERNOON DAILY ULTIMA HORA, WHICH SAID UNNAMED SOURCE WITHIN DOMINICAN COMMISSION HAD TERMED PUERTO RICANS "NOT TECHNICIANS BUT PROPAGANDISTS IN FAVOR OF SUPER-PORT PROJECT". ON OTHER HAND, COMMENTS OF DOMINICAN COMMISSION PRESS SPOKESMAN FRANK MARINO HERNANDEZ FOLLOWING MEETING-ALTHOUGH UNDERSTANDABLY CAUTIOUS-WERE POSITIVE AND underscored USEFULNESS OF KEEPING UP CONTINUING DIALOGUE ON PROJECT.

HURWITCH

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Message Attributes

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Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
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Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MorefiRH
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
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Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Errors: N/A
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ISecure: 1
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